

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 /018 W
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O R 200600Z JUL 76
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3375

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BAGHDAD 0985

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BTRA, PINR
SUBJ: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ABDULWAHAB BUNNIA

REF: BAGHDAD 0984

1. TO ASSIST IN PLANNING FOR BUNNIA VISIT TO US, WE ARE PROVIDING FOLLOWING BACKGROUND DATA. INFORMATION MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE WITH DISCRETION TO BUNNIA'S PROSPECTIVE CONTACTS.

2. HE IS THE ELDEST OF THREE BROTHERS WHO CONTROL 12 COMPANIES THROUGH PARENT FIRM FOUNDED BY THEIR FATHER. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO EXACT INFORMATION ABOUT ANNUAL SALES OR NET WORTH, BUNNIA IS REPUTEDLY IRAQ'S WEALTHIEST MAN. ONE SOURCE PUTS ANNUAL PERSONAL INCOME AT 53 59 10 MILLION IRAQI DINARS (17-34 MILLION DOLLARS). ONE INDICATION OF BUNNIA GROUP ASSETS IS THAT HE TOLD USINT OFFICER THAT HE CAN FINANCE PROJECTS UP TO THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS FROM BUNNIA GROUP RESOURCES AND IS ONLY INTERESTED IN ARRANGING FINANCING FOR PROJECTS ABOVE THAT AMOUNT.

3. PERSONALLY, ABDULWAHAB BUNNIA IS A DEVOUT MUSLEM, NEITHER DRINKS NOR SMOKES, AND RECENTLY BUILT BAGHDAD'S LARGEST MOSQUE AS A MEMORIAL TO HIS FATHER. HE DRESSES IN TRADITIONAL ARABIC COSTUME, WHICH PARTIALLY HIDES FACIAL DISFIGUREMENT CAUSED BY A SEVERE BURN AT THE AGE OF EIGHT. THE ACCIDENT ALSO IMPAIRED THE USE OF HIS RIGHT HAND, AND HE SHAKES HANDS WITH HIS LEFT. IN HIS MID-FORTIES, HE HAS ONE WIFE AND TEN CHILDREN. HE COLLECTS ORIENTAL RUGS, WORRY BEADS, WATCHES, AND CHINESE ANTIQUE FURNITURE.

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4. ON USINT'S RECOMMENDATIONS, BUNNIA HAS ENTERTAINED SEVERAL PROMINENT US BUSINESSMEN, WHO HAVE FOUND HIM ASTUTE AND HARDWORKING. DURING HIS US VISIT, HE WANTS TO CRAM AS MANY BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS AS POSSIBLE INTO HIS TIME, INCLUDING ON WEEKENDS. HE DOES NOT WANT TO VISIT WASHINGTON "FOR POLITICAL REASONS" AND THUS REQUESTS THAT THE TWO WASHINGTON AREA BUSINESSMEN HE WANTS TO SEE FLY TO NEW YORK. HE WANTS TO RPT NO PUBLICITY BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS IN IRAQ. LITTLE IS KNOWN OF HIS POLITICAL CONNECTIONS; HOWEVER, HE HAS ACCUMULATED MOST OF HIS WEALTH SINCE THE BAATH REGIME SEIZED POWER IN 1968.

5. AS BUNNIA IS IRAQ'S MOST PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN IN THE PROVATE SECTOR, HIS VISIT COULD PRODUCE SEVERAL LARGE ORDERS FOR US COMPANIES. THUS WE RECOMMEND THAT USDOC PROVIDE AS MUCH SUPPORT AS POSSIBLE TO HIM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BAGHDA00985
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760278-0693
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760742/aaaabksr.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BAGHDAD 984
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ABDULWAHAB BUNNIA
TAGS: BTRA, PINR, IZ, (BUNNIA, ABDULWAHAB)
To: COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006